

Model for eukaryotic tail-anchored protein binding based on the structure of Get3

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The Get3 ATPase directs the delivery of tail-anchored (TA) proteins to the endoplasmic reticulum (ER). TA-proteins are characterized by having a single transmembrane helix (TM) at their extreme C terminus and include many essential proteins, such as SNAREs, apoptosis factors, and protein translocation components. These proteins cannot follow the SRP-dependent co-translational pathway that typifies most integral membrane proteins; instead, post-translationally, these proteins are recognized and bound by Get3 then delivered to the ER in the ATP dependent Get pathway. To elucidate a molecular mechanism for TA protein binding by Get3 we have determined three crystal structures in apo and ADP forms from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (ScGet3-apo) and *Aspergillus fumigatus* (AfGet3-apo and AfGet3-ADP). Using structural information, we generated mutants to confirm important interfaces and essential residues. These results point to a model of how Get3 couples ATP hydrolysis to the binding and release of TA-proteins.

ArsA | crystallography | Deviant Walker A | Get pathway | protein transport

Tail-anchored (TA) proteins represent a large and diverse class of integral membrane proteins that are found in all organisms. These include numerous types of proteins, such as SNAREs, apoptosis factors, and protein translocation components. TA proteins are characterized by having a single transmembrane helix (TM) at their extreme C terminus. Due to this topological constraint, these proteins are not able to follow the SRP-dependent co-translational pathway that typifies most integral membrane proteins. Instead, these proteins must find their correct membrane for insertion post-translationally (reviewed in refs. 1 and 2).

The ATPase Get3 was the first protein identified directly involved in TA targeting and is part of the Get pathway (now known as Guided Entry of Tail-anchored proteins) that also contains the ER membrane proteins Get1/2 and the putative ribosome receptor proteins Get4/5 (3–7). Multiple studies have shown that Get3 binds directly to the hydrophobic tail-anchors and, in conjunction with ribosome and endoplasmic reticulum (ER) factors, utilizes an ATP cycle to bind and then release TA proteins at the ER membrane.

Get3 was originally annotated Asna-1/Arr4p due to its apparent homology ($\approx 25\%$ identity) to the bacterial arsenite transporter component ArsA (8). Get3 homologues had been implicated in a diverse set of functions now presumed to be linked to the correct localizations of TA proteins (9–12). Get3 is a protein-targeting factor, analogous to the signal recognition particle (SRP), and, similar to SRP components (13), is not essential for viability in yeast; however, the cells are sensitive to a variety of stresses such as heat and metals (14).

Get3 contains a nucleotide hydrolase domain (NHD) that resembles the G-type hydrolases characterized by Ras [for review see (15)]. These proteins all have the completely conserved 'P-loop' that recognize the α - and β -phosphate in both NDP and NTP states. Other features of G-type hydrolases are Switch I (A') and Switch II (Walker B) loops that undergo dramatic rearrangements coupling structural changes to the presence of the γ -phosphate. In these proteins, catalysis is

stimulated by a positively charged residue that stabilizes negative charge on the phosphates and a residue that positions a catalytic water for nucleophilic attack.

Get3, like ArsA and the nitrogenase iron protein (NifH), belongs to a special class of ATPases that contain a 'deviant' Walker A motif which is a P-loop with an additional invariant lysine (GKGGVGKT in Get3) (16). This is a rare motif, found in only two other yeast proteins [including a putative Fe-protein homologue (17)]. A basic model for the deviant P-loop ATP hydrolysis cycle can be inferred by the structure of a NifH dimer bound to ADP- AlF_4^- and its partner the MoFe protein (18). The ADP and apo forms of NifH are in an open conformation that is inactive for ATP hydrolysis (19). Binding of the MoFe protein, along with ATP, causes a large rotational and translational shift of the two NifH monomers that brings the deviant P-loop lysine from the opposing monomer into a position to stabilize the build up of negative charge on the phosphates. This is analogous to the mechanism in Ras where an Arg-finger from a GAP stimulates hydrolysis of ATP leading to Ras inactivation (20, 21). This interface shift demonstrates how ATP can modulate dramatic structural changes. Critical to all of this, the rearrangements are stabilized by binding of the MoFe protein (18). In the case of ArsA, without its partner ArsB bound, no states are found in which both NHD bind the same nucleotide and it is reasonable to speculate that in a true ATP state a dramatic conformational change must occur as well (22, 23).

There are no mechanistic studies detailing how Get3 performs its important targeting function and a molecular level understanding requires structural information. Here we present three crystal structures of Get3/TRC40, a monomeric apo form from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (ScGet3) and dimeric apo and hexameric ADP-bound forms from the thermophilic opportunistic human pathogen *Aspergillus fumigatus* (AfGet3 and AfGet3-ADP). Based on the structures, we probed functional interfaces and essential residues by phenotypic rescue. Our results allow us to define a model of how Get3 couples ATP hydrolysis to the binding and release of TA-proteins. More broadly, this work supports a mechanism for a special class of ATPases.

Results

Crystallization of Get3. We purified ScGet3 and AfGet3 from constructs expressed in *E. coli* using Ni-affinity and size exclusion chromatography under reducing conditions. The majority of the protein eluted as a dimer from both constructs and this was used in crystallization trials. The AfGet3-ADP crystals diffracted to 3.2-Å resolution in the space group $P2_12_12_1$ with a hexamer in

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data deposition: The atomic coordinates and structure factors have been deposited in the RCSB Protein Data Bank, www.pdb.org (PDB ID codes 31BG for AfGet3-ADP and 31DQ for ScGet3).

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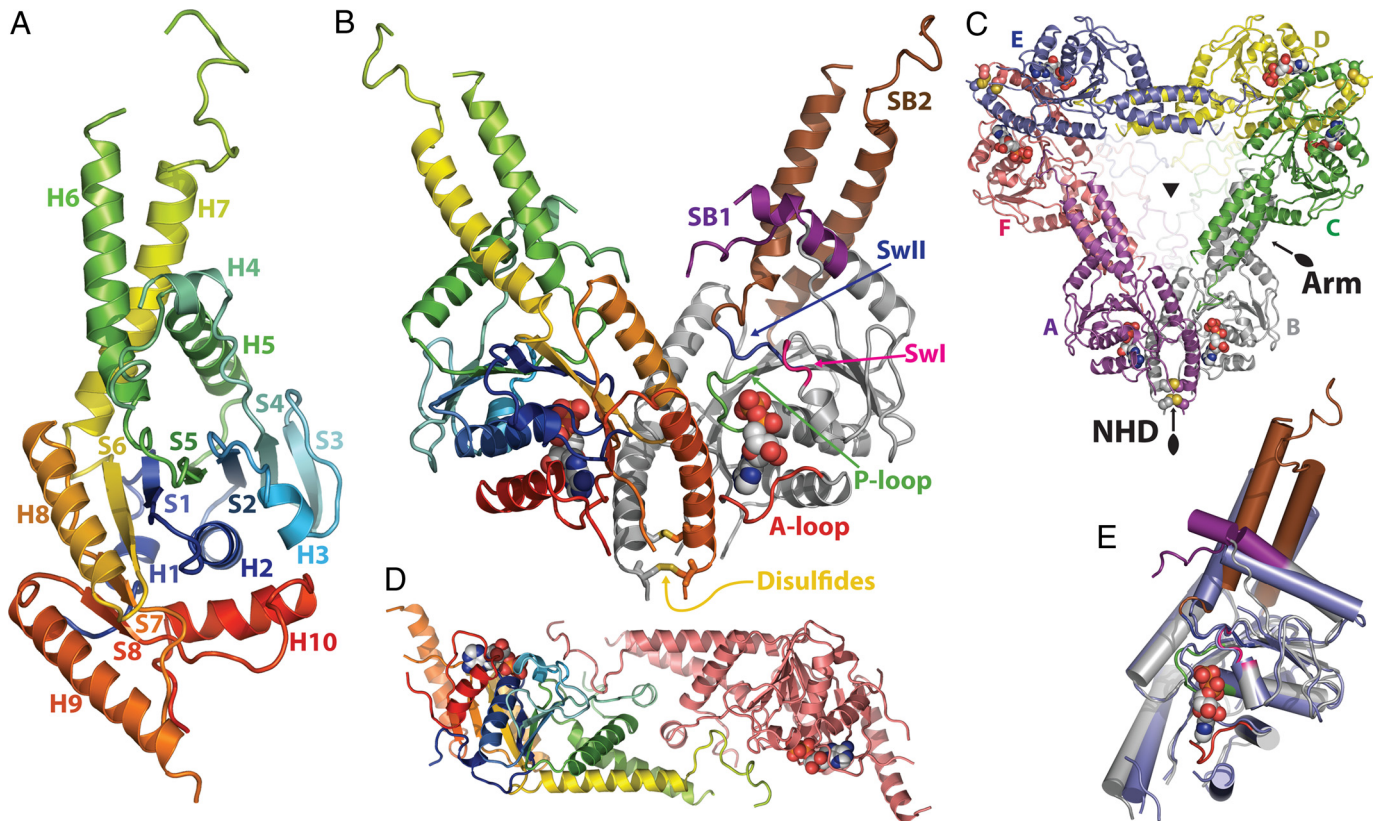


Fig. 1. Structures of Get3. (A) An AfGet3-ADP monomer with secondary structure elements numbered as in Fig. S1. (B) The NHD dimer of the AfGet3-ADP hexamer. One monomer is color ramped from N- (blue) to C- (red) and the other is colored relative to motifs described in the text: P-loop (green), Switch I (magenta), Switch II (blue), A-loop (red), SB1 (purple), and SB2 (brown). (C) The AfGet3-ADP hexamer of the asymmetric unit colored by monomers. Dimer interfaces and subunits are labeled. The 3-fold is indicated by a triangle and 2-folds are indicated by an oval. The modeled residues from SB1 of each monomer are transparent. Nucleotides and bridging disulfides are shown as spheres. (D) The arm dimer of the AfGet3-ADP hexamer. One monomer is color ramped as in A and the other is colored salmon. (E) The ScGet3 model colored purple and overlaid with an AfGet3-ADP monomer colored and oriented as in B.

the asymmetric unit. A seleno-methionine data set was collected to 4.5-Å resolution and phases were solved by multiwavelength anomalous dispersion and extended to 3.2-Å resolution using the 6-fold noncrystallographic symmetry. The final refined structure contained 292 of 348 residues with a Free-R factor of 25.1% (Fig. 1C and Fig. S1). The two Apo forms of Get3 were solved using molecular replacement of a truncated *Af*Get3-ADP monomer. The *Sc*Get3-apo crystal form diffracted to 3.7-Å resolution in the space group H32 and contained a monomer in the asymmetric unit. The final model contained 260 of 369 residues and refined to a Free-R factor of 33.5% (Fig. S2 A and B). The *Af*Get3-apo crystal form diffracted to 7.5-Å resolution in the space group P4₂32 and contained a dimer in the asymmetric unit that we did not refine due to the low resolution (Fig. S2D). Crystallographic statistics are provided in Table S1.

Description of a Get3 Monomer. The structure of a monomer of Get3 is a mixed alpha-beta fold containing a “P-loop” type NHD with two α -helical loops that extend outward from the structure, here designated substrate binding loop 1 (SB1) and 2 (SB2) (Fig. 1 *A* and *B*). The Get3 NHD fold falls into a more specific structural class [defined by SCOP (24)] that includes ArsA (25), GTPase domains of the signal recognition particle (SRP) (26), and SRP receptor (27) along with NifH (28). Get3 is the only eukaryotic example in this class that utilizes ATP.

The Three Crystal Forms of Get3. The *Af*-ADP crystal form contains a hexamer in the asymmetric unit (Fig. 1C) with 3-fold symmetry in which the monomer can be assembled into

two potential dimers formed by either SB1/2 (arm dimer) or by the interface between the NHD (Fig. 1 *B* and *D*). Although the arm dimer contains a more extensive interface, 1758Å² versus 1263Å² calculated by PISA (29), we believe that the NHD dimer is the most relevant to TA-protein binding and contains two disulfides formed across the interface by a conserved pair of cysteines (Fig. 1*B*).

The *Sc*-apo crystal form contains a monomer in the asymmetric unit (Fig. 1E and Fig. S2A), and there is no apparent NHD dimer interface despite the protein purifying as a dimer. The crystals are stabilized by the coordination of a zinc by Cys-285/Cys-288 and the His-tag which also coordinates a second metal at the crystallographic three fold in a square-planar geometry (Fig. S2A). The *Af*Get3-apo contains two copies in the asymmetric unit in an orientation similar to the NHD dimer, although rotated so that the SB1 and SB2 regions of the two monomers are slightly closer (Fig. S2E). Both Apo crystal forms contain symmetry related interfaces similar to the arm dimer (Figs. S2C and S3F).

Monomers in each of the three crystal forms show slight variations in SB1/2 demonstrating the general mobility of these regions (Fig. 1E and Fig. S2F). These loops in the hexamer are stabilized by a series of hydrophobic interactions in a highly flexible region that perhaps explains the difficulty in obtaining high-resolution crystals. SB1 and SB2 contain disordered regions in all of the crystal forms. The missing residues of SB1 have been modeled into the *Af*Get3-ADP hexamer to demonstrate the amount of disordered protein that could not be built (Fig. 1C).

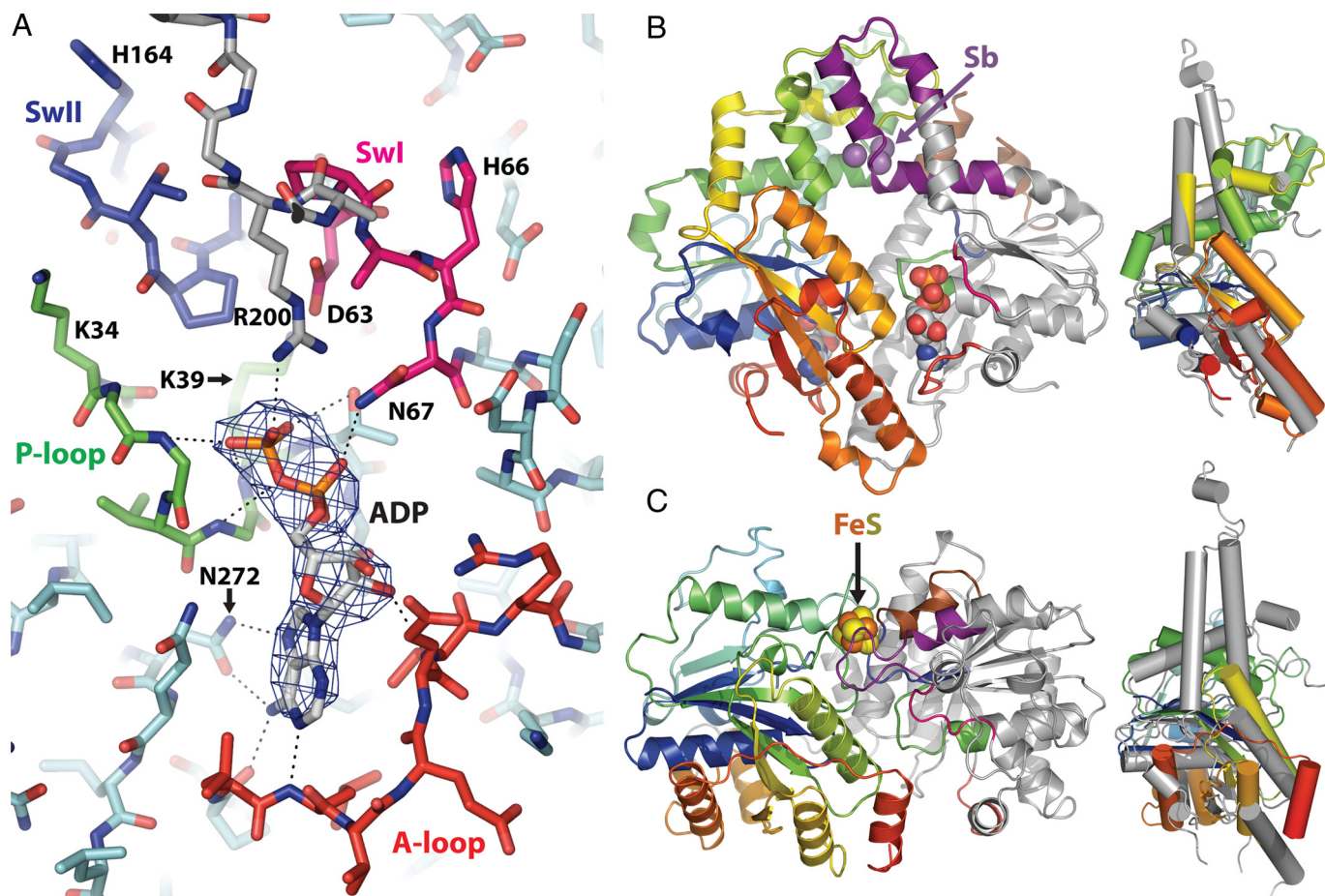


Fig. 2. The nucleotide-binding pocket and comparison of Get3 to other hydrolases. (A) The nucleotide-binding pocket of *AfGet3*-ADP with residues shown as sticks. Density is a $2F_o - F_c$ omit-map contoured at 1.5σ . (B) A ribbon diagram of the ADP form of *EcArsA* (1f48) with ADP, Mg^{2+} (green) and coordinated Sb (purple) as spheres. (C) A ribbon diagram of the apo form of *NifH* (2nip) with the Fe/S cluster (orange/yellow) as spheres. To the right in B and C are overlays of monomers the *AfGet3*-ADP monomer (gray) on the respective left subunit. Important residues and motifs are labeled. All residues in nucleotide binding motifs are colored as in 1B.

Nucleotide Binding. The Get3 nucleotide-binding pocket contains all of the features generally found in G-type hydrolases. The completely conserved Asn in S7 (*Sc/Af272*) forms hydrogen-bonds that specifically select for adenine. Additional interactions with the A-loop complete adenosine recognition (Fig. 2A). The P-loop, as is typical, makes extensive contacts to the α - and β -phosphate; however, the second lysine, completely conserved in P-loops, is in an orientation that points away from the β -phosphate. This is caused by an interaction in the arm dimer that leads to an Arg from SB2 (*Af200*) moving into the active site occupying a similar position near where one would expect Mg^{2+} to be bound (Fig. 2A). It is clear that *AfR200* displaces the Mg^{2+} and generally disrupts the interactions of Switch I and II. Based on the resolution, we cannot be certain that there is no Mg^{2+} ; however, if present it would be in a unique position. *AfR200* forms a salt bridge to the β -phosphate; but it is not conserved making the extent of these interactions surprising.

Comparison to ArsA and NifH. Despite distinct functions, Get3 shares a similar topology to ArsA with an RMSD of 1.9 Å in their NHD (Fig. 2B) (PDBID 1f48) (25). In contrast to Get3, ArsA SB1/2 bend in across the NHD dimer interface forming a coordination site for heavy metals (Fig. 2A); however, these coordinating residues are not conserved in Get3. It is thought that motions of these loops are coupled to ATP hydrolysis regulating metal release via the Switch II motif (22). The dimer

interface is very similar to Get3 except that the interface is rotated moving the P-loop from 9.1-Å (G17/G336) separation in ArsA to 14.1 Å (*AfG35*) in Get3. An early homology model of Get3, based on ArsA, predicted the occurrence of the disulfide bridges between the subunits at the dimer interface. Based on the model they found that mutation of the two cysteines in Get3 was unable to rescue a metal sensitivity phenotype in a Get3 knockout (30). ArsA is a pseudodimer with a disordered linker peptide between the two subunits that may be required to stabilize the dimer interface.

The best understood deviant P-loop protein is *NifH* as its structure has been solved in Apo, ADP, and ADP- AlF_4^- forms. The structure closest to *AfGet3*-ADP is the *NifH*-Apo form (19) and the NHD domains have an RMSD of 2.78 Å. As noted, ATP stimulates a large conformational shift that moves the deviant P-loop (*A. vinelandii* *NifH* G11) from 10.1 Å to 4.0 Å apart. To move the Get3 dimer into a similar orientation would require an extensive conformational change across the dimer interface.

Tail-Anchoring Binding Pocket. In a search for the TA-protein binding pocket, the positions of SB1 and SB2 are clearly provocative. We analyzed the NHD dimer by displaying conserved and hydrophobic residues on a molecular accessibility surface (Fig. 3). The interface, formed by the NHD dimers, is highly conserved, as is expected for a common fold (Fig. 3A). The other concentration of conserved residues is found at the base and groove formed by

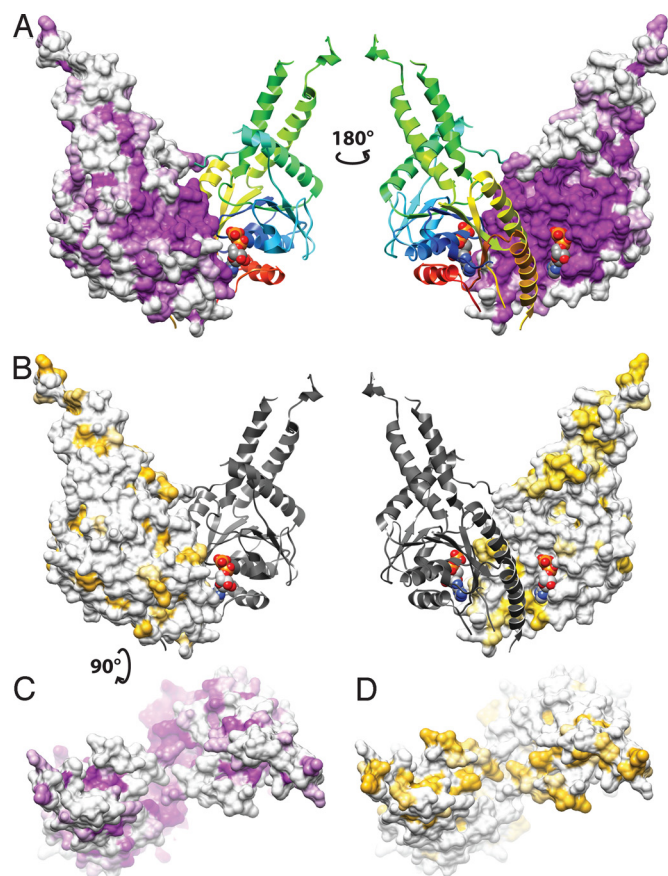


Fig. 3. Conserved and hydrophobic surfaces. (A) Front and back views showing one monomer as a ribbon colored as in 1A and the other as an accessible surface showing conservation colored as a gradient from 100% (purple) to 50% conserved (gray). Conservation is based on the Get3 alignment from Fig. S1 (B) Similar to A showing hydrophobicity based on the Kyte and Doolittle scale with most hydrophobic in dark yellow. (C) Conserved surface viewed from the top. (D) Hydrophobic surface viewed from the top.

SB1/SB2 (Fig. 3C). The overall alignment of SB1/SB2 is difficult; however, there is general conservation of hydrophobic residues and glycines (Fig. S1). Additionally, SB1 contains a disordered stretch that could also provide surface area in this region. The only hydrophobic patch on the surface of the dimer is that formed between SB1 and SB2 (Fig. 3B and D). This putative TA-binding region would be analogous to the location of the metal binding sites of ArsA or the Fe-S cluster in NifH (Fig. 2B and C) and one presumes that changes in the ATP binding pocket would be transmitted to this region.

Phenotypic Rescue. To probe the functional parts of Get3 we chose a series of mutants based on surface conservation or putative function and tested for their ability to rescue known knockout phenotypes (30). The knockout (*Δget3*) showed no obvious impairment on synthetic complete media at 30°C but was unable to fully rescue on media containing Cu^{2+} or hydroxyurea or growth at elevated temperature. Replacing the Get3 gene on a plasmid (*GET3*) with the wild-type promoter rescued the *Δget3* growth to near wild-type levels. We also inserted the *AfGet3* gene on the same plasmid and this also rescued the yeast knockout demonstrating that functional aspects of the protein are conserved across species (Fig. 4A and Fig. S3). In all, we generated 69 *Sc* mutants and two *Af* mutants and scored their general loss-of-function (LOF) phenotype as strong, moderate,

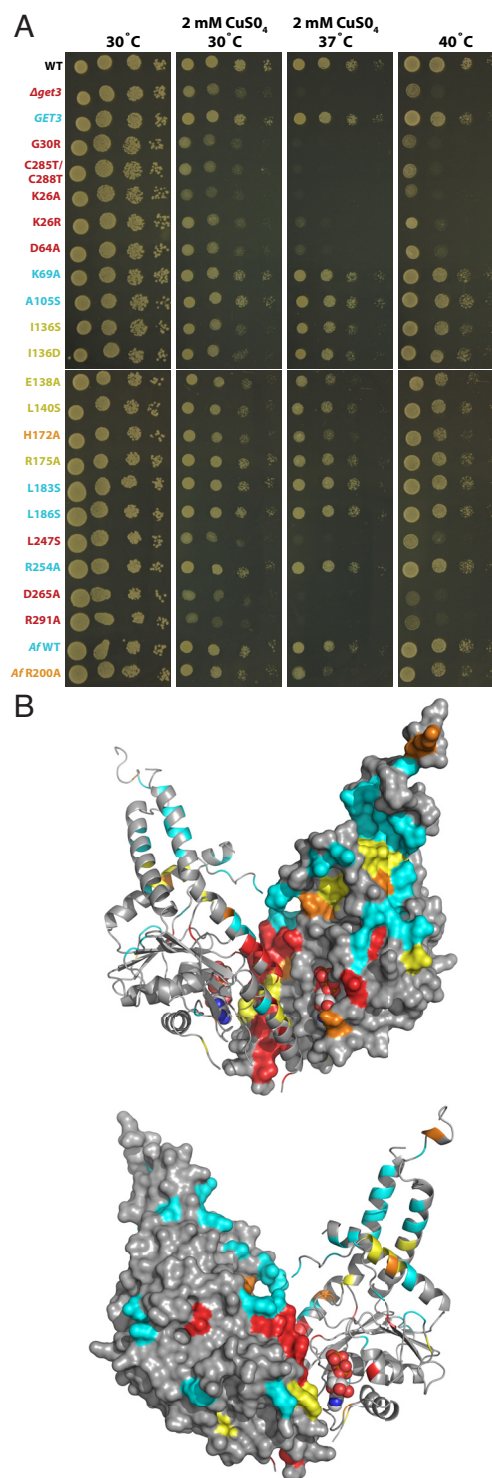


Fig. 4. Phenotypic rescue of various Get3 mutants. (A) Spot plate assays of various yeast mutants on a plasmid with a wild-type promoter screened on SC-Ura plates at 30°C and 40°C and supplemented with 2 mM CuSO_4 at both 30°C and 37°C. *Δget3* is the knockout transformed with a plasmid containing only the promoter. Mutants based on yeast numbering are indicated colored relative to their phenotype: strong (red), moderate (orange), weak (yellow), and none (cyan). (B) Two views with one monomer as accessible surface and the other in ribbon colored according to phenotype as in A.

weak or none (Fig. 4A and B, data for all mutants in Fig. S3 and Table S2).

In agreement with previous results, a mutation in either the

structures, SB1/2 interactions bury a significant amount of hydrophobic surface implying that they have a high affinity for binding protein (Fig. 1D and Fig. S2 C and F). In an open form these surfaces should be very unstable and it is hard to imagine that they could exist free in the cytoplasm. The hexamer seen in our crystal structure could be a stable resting form of the protein that needs additional factors, such as the Get4/Get5 proteins (7), to transition to the open dimer state. Another possibility is that the hexamer operates as an ADP-exchange factor (like a GEF for Ras) stabilizing the apo form for ATP binding by displacing the Mg^{2+} and releasing ADP. In *Af*Get3 the R200 salt bridges to the ADP β -phosphate, which would seem to stabilize the ADP form; however, the concentration of ADP in our crystal conditions is very high and the binding could be an artifact of that. A third, less likely, possibility would be that the hexamer is the active form of the complex and that TA proteins are stabilized in the flexible hydrophobic center reminiscent of some AAA ATPases (33). Evidence that supports a role for the hexamer is the importance of *Af*R200, a purified human Get complex sediments at a compatible size (4), the functional form of ArsA is a multimer (34), and a trimeric form of ArsA has been visualized by EM and chromatography (35).

Proper synthesis and targeting of TA-proteins by the Get pathway have broad implications in biology, as they are essential in many cellular homeostasis and transport processes. Our structural and functional studies are a mechanistic look at the recently identified pathway component Get3. These ex-

periments allow us to define a model that predicts the conformational changes in Get3 that are involved in TA-protein and nucleotide binding (Fig. S5). They also suggest an oligomeric form that may play a key role. Many aspects of TA-protein targeting, such as the specifics of substrate binding, interactions of partners and the kinetic steps of recognition and release, remain to be determined.

Methods

Full methods are provided in the *SI Text* including a crystallographic table and a full list of the mutants tested. We briefly discuss the methods here. C-terminally 6 \times His tagged *A. fumigatus* and *S. cerevisiae* Get3 coding sequences were cloned into pET33b vectors. Get3 was expressed in *E. coli* cells and purified with Ni-affinity and size exclusion chromatography. Initial crystallization conditions were identified in standard screens. *Af*Get3-ADP experimental phases were obtained from seleno-methionine derivatives using multiple-wavelength anomalous dispersion. Phases for both apo forms were obtained by molecular replacement. For growth assays, *Af* and *Sc*Get3 coding sequences were cloned into YEp352 vector and mutations were made with site-directed mutagenesis. Constructs were transformed into the strains BY4741 and the Get3 knockout strain BY4741 YDL100c::kanMX4.

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